

Policy - Research Project Investment Criteria and Approvals

1. PURPOSE

- SmartSat Cooperative Research Centre (SmartSat CRC) conducts research, education and training through a number of programs and projects aligned to its R&D Strategic Plan, and as described under the Commonwealth Agreement. This policy defines the criteria for evaluating research project proposals, and the approval process for investment decisions.

2. SCOPE

- This policy applies to all SmartSat CRC funded research projects.

3. REFERENCES

- This policy should be read in conjunction with the Policy – Equity and Diversity (in development).

4. RESEARCH INVESTMENT CRITERIA

- Full research project proposals requiring investment of >\$100K are assessed against the following criteria:
 - Strategic Alignment
 - Produce outcomes and impacts that align with the strategic objectives and values of SmartSat CRC; and
 - Meets well-articulated end-user needs
 - Impacts
 - Make a substantive contribution toward achieving impacts from the SmartSat CRC Impact Tool; and
 - Make a substantive contribution toward achieving outputs and associated milestones from the SmartSat CRC Commonwealth Agreement; and
 - Utilisation
 - Have a key industry or end-user champion;
 - Have a clear pathway for the adoption of the research outputs; and
 - Have an appropriate and viable utilisation and/or commercialisation strategy.
 - Research
 - Have a high probability of producing world class science outcomes where this is required to maximise the impact of the research when adopted for use;
 - Articulate a competitive position in relation to relevant research activities on an international basis;
 - Bring together a high quality research team;
 - Demonstrate meaningful inter-relationships with other SmartSat CRC programs;
 - Avoiding duplicating existing research unless there is a clear intention to do

- so (e.g. to ensure the development of a sovereign capability)
- Project Management
 - Have a well-developed project methodology;
 - Have a well-developed risk and opportunity assessment; and
 - Make a budget claim consistent with the objectives and scope of the project that represents value for money, leveraged with additional investment by project partners.

5. RESEARCH PROJECT APPROVALS

5.1 SmartSat Research Investment Committee (RIC)

- The RIC ranks all full proposals that are endorsed by the CEO and the Executive taking into account:
 - The pipeline of projects including spread of projects across Research Programmes 1, 2 and 3 and the overall technology map
 - The balance of short-term versus medium and long-term objectives across the CRC
 - The need to retain flexibility to invest in new areas and respond to new markets and opportunities
 - Overall budget, financial commitments, and leverage of SmartSat funds
 - IP, commercialisation and spectrum of end users
 - Strategic balance between fundamental infrastructure and capability building and specific project investments
 - Demonstrable commitment to equity and diversity in the project plan and impacts
- The RIC recommends to the Board proposals support and funding for each project

5.2 SmartSat Board

- The SmartSat Board approves research projects and the level and funding, taking into account:
 - The overall strategy of the CRC
 - The risk profile including legal and external factors
 - Future positioning of the CRC

5.3 Rapid Research Project Approvals

- The CEO may approve research project proposals requiring a rapid start provided that:
 - The investment required is \leq \$100K
 - A fast start is essential to support an exceptional project idea (e.g. proof of concept of innovative technology, or iterative research and development where the outcome is more difficult to define, but has the potential to lead to significant outcomes).
 - The project duration does not exceed 18 months
 - The project is ready for immediate start with all necessary staff in place
 - The project has an end-user letter of support

The CEO may recommend an investment of $>$ \$100K to be considered by the RIC out of session to ensure an agile process.

5.4 Confidential and Commercial-in-Confidence Approvals

- For research projects that are commercial-in-confidence, or carry specific confidentiality or are Defence security classified projects, the CEO will consult with the RIC Committee Chair to determine whether the project should go directly to the Board for consideration under provisions of confidentiality that are deemed appropriate
- Defence projects that carry any level of classification will be excluded from review by the SmartSat Board, RIC and SmartSat staff, except from those individuals with the appropriate level of security clearance.
- The policy for classified projects will be directed by the relevant Directorate within Australian Defence
- Summary reports on the quantum of funding for these projects will be provided in to the Board to enable it to fulfill its fiduciary responsibilities.

6. RESEARCH PROJECT REVIEWS

- Quarterly project reviews are conducted for all research projects <18 months and reports to the CEO and CRO with recommendations that either:
 - Milestones have been met and SmartSat funding continues, or
 - Milestones have not been met and either the project needs to be rescoped to address issues, or terminated.
- Formal mid-term project reviews are conducted for all research projects >18 months that are funded >\$250K or are assessed to be of high risk. The review panel will include one or more independent panel members.
 - The CRO presents the review report to the CEO
 - The CEO and CRO present the report to the project leader and receive feedback
 - The RIC considers the report and feedback and makes recommendations to the Board
- The RIC receives a report of all Rapid Project Approvals and considers them as part of overall project pipeline